



Conference on ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INDICATORS FOR CALIFORNIA

January 18-19, 2001

“IDEA WALL”

[NOTE TO READER: During the conference, participants were encouraged to write down their ideas, suggestions or comments on an “idea wall.” These ideas – and reactions to them -- are captured below.]

We should be measuring contaminants in breast milk as an “environmental” indicator and risk indicator.

I’d like to hear more about the uses of indicators. What decisions will be made or altered by the information produced by the Environmental Protection Indicators for California (EPIC) reports? Specific examples or intentions would be helpful.

The meeting was great fun and good people, etc.

What discussions are occurring in Cal/EPA upper management about National Environmental Performance Partnerships/Performance Partnership Agreements (NEPPS/PPAs)? Single-medium U.S. EPA grant agreements will be barriers to addressing chosen indicators.

- Absolutely agree

This may sound wacky, but ... can you take samples during autopsies to check for body burden of priority chemicals? People would give permission similar to the organ donor program.

- This is happening already.
- By whom?

Environmental indicators that include social economic indicators are essential.

At a minimum, California should consider adopting the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) “Core Set” of environmental indicators. They’re not perfect, but since it’s what the rest of the world uses, I think that we should attempt to get into step given California’s population and economy.

- The OECD set is weak on ecological indicators. Perhaps the National Research Council's set might be appropriate here ("Ecological Indicators for the Nation", National Academy Press, 2000).
- For example, the OECD indicator of pesticide consumption is, in my opinion, a weak criterion because you have no idea on the surface, of which pesticides are in use, where in the State they're being used, on what crops, etc. However, for those interested, the Department of Pesticide Regulation yearly reports on pesticide usage solve that problem. On the other hand, other state agencies are not so forthcoming. I've been lied to and stonewalled by one agency.

All data used for the construction of the indicators must be public and transparent.

There should be some mechanism for QA/QC in the process. For many years, the Department of Toxic Substance Control's hazardous waste database insisted that Camp Pendleton was in San Bernardino County. And the data managers continually refused to correct the mistake. Other smaller problems existed as well. If memory serves me correctly, one gas station in South Lake Tahoe was "credited" to San Mateo County.

The Governor's Report should be institutionalized and have much wider distribution. As it stands now, it is accessible only from the Cal/EPA web site. It is not available in any of the University of California (UC) libraries, or for that matter, the California State Library.

For the past several years, a number of my colleagues in UC and I have bounced around the idea of trying to put together a baseline document on the State of the California Environment, highly quantitative, covering perhaps the last 30 years (since NEPA), modeled perhaps on the Canadian or Australian State of the Environment Reports (both 500 pages plus; Canada's is done every five years; and the Australian's have a set of environmental indicators now that we should perhaps follow up on). I've got most of the authors lined up but it's continually been on a back burner because of higher priorities. Might this be something that could serve as a foundation for your new set of indicators.